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ABSTRACT

This book describes how bilingual children and their families actively and innovatively use available cultural and linguistic resources to pursue their goals. Three separate ethnographic studies were conducted within the same Mexicano community in Lincoln City, California. Descriptions of everyday talk of children and adults focus on how children acquire and use knowledge and language from a variety of contexts to accomplish social and personal needs. Descriptions highlight conversations during preschoolers' routine activities in home and school, use of school language or knowledge in such interactions, parents' deliberate role in their children's language socialization, the linguistic flexibility of preadolescent bilingual children, one child's role as interpreter and advocate, analytic strategies children learn during extended problem-solving situations as the immigrant family negotiates a new language and culture, and the children of immigrants as cultural brokers. Ethnographic data are interpreted from a "recognition perspective" that looks beyond cultural discontinuity to capture similarities in language use across various contexts, the convergence of multiple knowledge sources in a single context, and the uniqueness of language use practices fostered by Mexican culture. Rather than being isolated, the immigrant Mexicano community exists at an intersection of multiple cultures and languages, full of opportunities to acquire, transmit, or combine cultural and linguistic resources. Pedagogical implications of this view are explored through three examples--cross-age tutoring, after-school educational activities, and two-way bilingual education--that illustrate how linguistic and cultural practices can inform curriculum development and instructional strategies. Contains 148 references, notes, and an index. (SV)

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